The down or silk of the seeds, in this and other species, furnishes an admirable mechanism for their dissemination. When the seeds are liberated by the bursting of the follicle which contains them, the silken fibres immediately expand so as to form a sort of globe of branching and highly attenuated rays, with the seed suspended at its centre. In this state they are elevated by the wind to an indefinite height, and carried forward with a voyage like that of a balloon, until some obstacle intercepts their flight, or rain precipitates them to the ground.

The down of different species of Asclepias is susceptible of application to various useful and ornamental purposes. If the fibre were sufficiently long to admit of its being woven or spun, it would approach more closely to silk in its gloss and texture, than any vegetable product we possess. As it is, it has been substituted for fur, in the manufacture of hats, and for feathers in beds and cushions. When attached by its ends to any woven fabric, this down forms a beautiful imitation of the finest and softest fur skins, and is applicable to various purposes of dress. The Asclepias Syriaca, from its frequency and the large size of its pods, has been most frequently employed for the foregoing purposes. [*Note* A.]

The root of the Butterfly weed when dry is brittle and easily reduced to powder. Its taste is moderately bitter, but not otherwise unpleasant. Its most abundant soluble portions are a bitter extractive matter and fæcula. No evidence of astringency is afforded on adding solutions of isinglass or copperas, and hardly any traces of resin on adding water to alcohol digested on the root. The decoction afforded a flaky precipitate to alcohol, when the infusion did not. Boiling water may be considered the proper menstruum for this plant.

This fine vegetable is eminently intitled to the attention of physicians as an expectorant and diaphoretic. It produces effects of this kind with great gentleness, and without the heating tendency which accompanies many vegetable sudorifics. It has been long employed by practitioners in the Southern States in pulmonary complaints, particularly in catarrh, pneumonia and pleurisy, and has acquired much confidence for the relief of these maladies. It appears to be an expectorant peculiarly suited to the advanced stages of pulmonary inflammation, after depletion has been carried to the requisite extent. Dr. Parker of Virginia, as cited by Dr. Thacher, having been in the habit of employing this root for twenty five years, consid-

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